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Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 MCT-01 SY-05

IO-13 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 TRSE-00 /070 W
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R 291314Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2824
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NAIROBI 10604

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, KE
SUBJ: TERRORIST ATTACK IN ISTANBUL AND AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. SUMMARY: EMB HAS URGED GOK TO RATIFY ICAO CONVENTIONS ON CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY. PREVAILING ANTI-TERRORIST MEASURES AT KENYAN AIRPORTS ARE WEAK OR NON-EXISTENT, DESPITE COUNTRY'S CURRENTLY HIGH RISK EXPOSURE. CONSEQUENTLY, POST FEELS FAA ASSISTANCE COULD BE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL IN RAISING GOK CONSCIOUSNESS ABOUT AIRPORT PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. GOK MINISTRY OF POWER AND COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED 1970 HAGUE AND 1971 MONTREAL CONVENTIONS TO CABINET FOR APPROVAL JULY 1976. CABINET HAS NOT YET SUBMITTED RECOMMENDATION ON RATIFICATION. EMB HAS THEREFORE ADDRESSED NOTE VERBALE TO FONMIN EXPRESSING USG INTEREST IN EARLY RATIFICATION.

3. INTELLIGENCE REPORTS AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON WILL SUPPORT EMB OPINION THAT KENYA AIRPORT FACILITIES ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE AT THIS TIME TO TERRORIST ATTACK OR SABOTAGE. PREVENTIVE MEASURES UNDERTAKEN BY GOK ARE,
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VEN BY OFFICIAL ASSESSMENT, HIGHLY INEFFECTIVE; ONLY BE SHEER LUCK HAS KENYA SO FAR ESCAPED INCIDENTS OF MAJOR

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

VIOLENCE. FIVE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS ARE LOCATED IN COUNTRY, PRINCIPAL AERODROMES BEING NAIROBI INTERNATIONAL AND MOMBASA. FORMER IS SERVICED BY OVER 25 INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS AND REGISTERED 1975 TRAFFIC LOADS OF 1.4 MILLION PASSENGERS AND 33.5 MILLION TONS OF FREIGHT. APPROXIMATELY 10,000 AMERICANS VISIT KENYA YEARLY. NAIROBI IS PRIMARY STOPOVER ON EUROPE-SOUTH AFRICA ROUTES AND HAS MINOR CONNECTIONS TO MIDDLE EASTERN CAPITALS THROUGH ADEN, CARIRO AND BOMBAY. CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR PAST TWO YEARS ON NEW AIRPORT COMPLEX, EXPANDING PASSENGER AND CARGO SERVICES IN SUCCESSIVE STAGES THROUGH 1980'S. MOMBASA AIR-PORT ALSO UNDERGOING ENLARGEMENT TO ACCOMMODATE WIDE-BODIES AIRCRAFT AND CURRENTLY HANDLES DIRECT FLIGHTS FROM WESTERN EUROPE. GROWING IMPORTANCE OF NAIROBI AS CENTER FOR INTER-NATIONAL CONFERENCES MEANS A HIGH VOLUME OF DIPLOMATIC OR OFFICIAL TRAVELLERS WHO UNDERGO MINIMUM PHYSICAL SECURITY INSPECTION.

4. EMB DISCUSSED PREVAILING SECURITY MEASURES AT NAIROBI AIRPORT WITH SENIOR POLIC OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR STATE SECURITY. LATTER ATTRIBUTED LEAKY COVERAGE TO DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN GOK. POLICE AND MINISTRY OF POWER AND COMMUNICATIONS SHARE AUTHROTIY FOR AIRPORT PROTECTION. BOTH OPERATE ON EXTREMELY LIMITED BUDGET APPARENTLY RE-FLECTING GENERAL LACK OF PRACTICAL CONCERN ABOUT KENYA'S VULNERABILITY TO INTERNATION TERRORISM AS WELL AS FINANCIAL SQUEEZE ON GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES.

5. POLIC OFFICER MENTIONED FOLLOWING SPECIFIC WEAKNESSES IN CURRENT PROTECTIVE SCREEN AT NAIROBI AIRPORT (WHICH ENJOYS HIGHEST SECURITY OF ALL KENYA AERODROMES):

A) NO PASS SYSTEM EXISTS TO IDENTIFY LEGITIMATE AIRPORT WORKERS. AIRLINE PERSONNEL HAVE VOLUNTARILY INSTITUTED PASS SYSTEM FOR THEIR OWN STAFFS;

B) POOR ILLUMINATION OF RAMP ACCESS ROUTES AND AIRPORT WORK AREAS;

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C) NO RELIABLE PERIPHERAL FENCING OF AIRPORT GROUNDS (B-747 COLLIDED WITH HYENA ON TAKE-OFF EARLIER THIS YEAR);

D) VISITOR PASS SYSTEM GROSSLY ABUSED. OVER 200 PERMANENT PASSES GIVING FREE ACCESS TO ALL PARTS OF AIRPORT ARE IN CIRCULATION WITHOUT RECORD OF BEARERS;

E) RELATIVELY FREE USE OF VIP LOUNGE, WHERE INDIVIDUALS UNDERGO NO SECURITY INSPECTION;

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

F) PRIMITIVE INSPECTION EQUIPMENT RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY GOK (TWO X-RAY MACHINES AND A FEW BORROWED METAL DETECTORS) ARE CHRONICALLY MALFUNCTIONING;

G) PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF BOARDING PASSENGERS ERRATICALLY ENFORCED;

H) TRANSIT PASSENGERS MIX FREELY WITH NAIROBI BOARDERS AND UNDERGO NO PERSONAL OR BAGGAGE CHECK;

I) NO CHECK OF BAGGAGE CLAIMED BY ARRIVING OR TRANSIT PASSENGERS. ONLY CURSORY VISUAL CHECK OF BOARDING PASSENGER BAGGAGE.

6. ACCORDING TO POLICE OFFICIAL, AIRLINES ARE CONSTANTLY SEEKING SPECIAL PROTECTION IN RESPONSE TO PERIODIC ALERTS, BUT IN MOST CASES MUST RELY ON THEIR OWN STAFF TO PROCEED WITH SECURITY CHECKS. SOLE U.S. COMMERCIAL CARRIER TRAFFICKING NAIROBI IS PAN AMERICAN, WHOSE LOCAL DIRECTOR FULLY RECOGNIZES LIMITS OF AIRPORT AND AIRCRAFT SECURITY PROTECTION IN KENYA. PAN AM PERSONNEL EXERCISE PASSENGER SEARCHES WITH HELP OF PORTABLE EQUIPMENT BUT ARE UNABLE TO INFLUENCE GENERAL PHYSICAL SECURITY SITUATION PREVAILING IN AIRPORT BUILDINGS.

7. POLICE OFFICIAL INTERVIEWED HAS ATTEMPTED TO PERSUADE GOK TO PURCHASE SPECIFIC CANADIAN AND FINNISH EQUIPMENT PERMITTING CLOSER EXAMINATION OF PASSENGERS AND CARRY-ON BAGGAG. HE ALSO RECOMMENDED A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN SECURITY UNITS ASSIGNED TO AIRPORTS. GOK HAS TURNED DOWN ALL REQUESTS ON GROUNDS OF FINANCIAL OUTLAY.
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8. RECOMMENDATION: EMB BELIEVES FIRST STEP IS RAISING SECURITY CONSCIOUSNESS OF TOP GOK OFFICIALS IN MINISTRY OF POWER AND COMMUNICATIONS AND OFFICE OF PRESIDENT REGARDING VULNERABILITY OF KENYAN FACILITIES. UNTIL POLICY-LEVEL PERSONNEL FULLY CONVINCED OF NEED TO UPGRADE AIRPORT PROTECTION, SPECIFIC SECURITY PROGRAMS SUGGESTED BYWORKING-LEVEL PERSONNEL WILL NOT RECEIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION. PERHAPS MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH WOULD BE SUCCINCT PRESENTATION IN KENYA BY SMALL FAA TEAM LED BY OFFICER AT ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR LEVEL AND USING AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS. LATTER SHOULD IDENTIFY SPECIFIC WEAKNESSES IN ROUTINE SECURITY PROGRAMS FOLLOWED AT WORLD AIRPORTS, DEMONSTRATE HOW TERRORISTS HAVE EXPLOITED THEM, AND DRAMATIZE DAMAGE INCURRED IN PAST ATTACKS. FAA TEAM MAY ALSO OFFER TO BRIEFLY SURVEY NAIROBI AIRPORT WITH KENYAN SECURITY PERSONNEL. WE HAVE ALSO CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVE OF FAA COURSE TRAINING IN USA FOR WORKING-LEVEL SECURITY OFFICERS. THIS ALTERNATIVE, HOWEVER, HAS

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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ALREADY BEEN PURSUED (ONE POLICE OFFICER TRAINED IN US IN 1975; TWO MORE TO GO TO WEST GERMANY IN 1976). WHILE HELPFUL FOR TRAINEES, FOLLOW-UP REPORTS INDICATE THEY ARE INVARIABLY FRUSTRATED UPON RETURN BY LACK OF SUPPORT FROM SUPERIORS IN POLICE AND MINISTRY.

9. WE REALIZE EMB PROPOSAL AMBITIOUS IN RESPECT TO CONSTRAINTS ON FAA RESOURCES; HOWEVER, LONG-TERM GROWTH IN KENYAN CIVIL AVIATION TRAFFIC AND COUNTRY'S PROXIMITY TO POLITICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS INCRAASE THE STAKES SIGNIFICANTLY. EMB WELCOMES DEPT AND FAA SUGGESTIONS.

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